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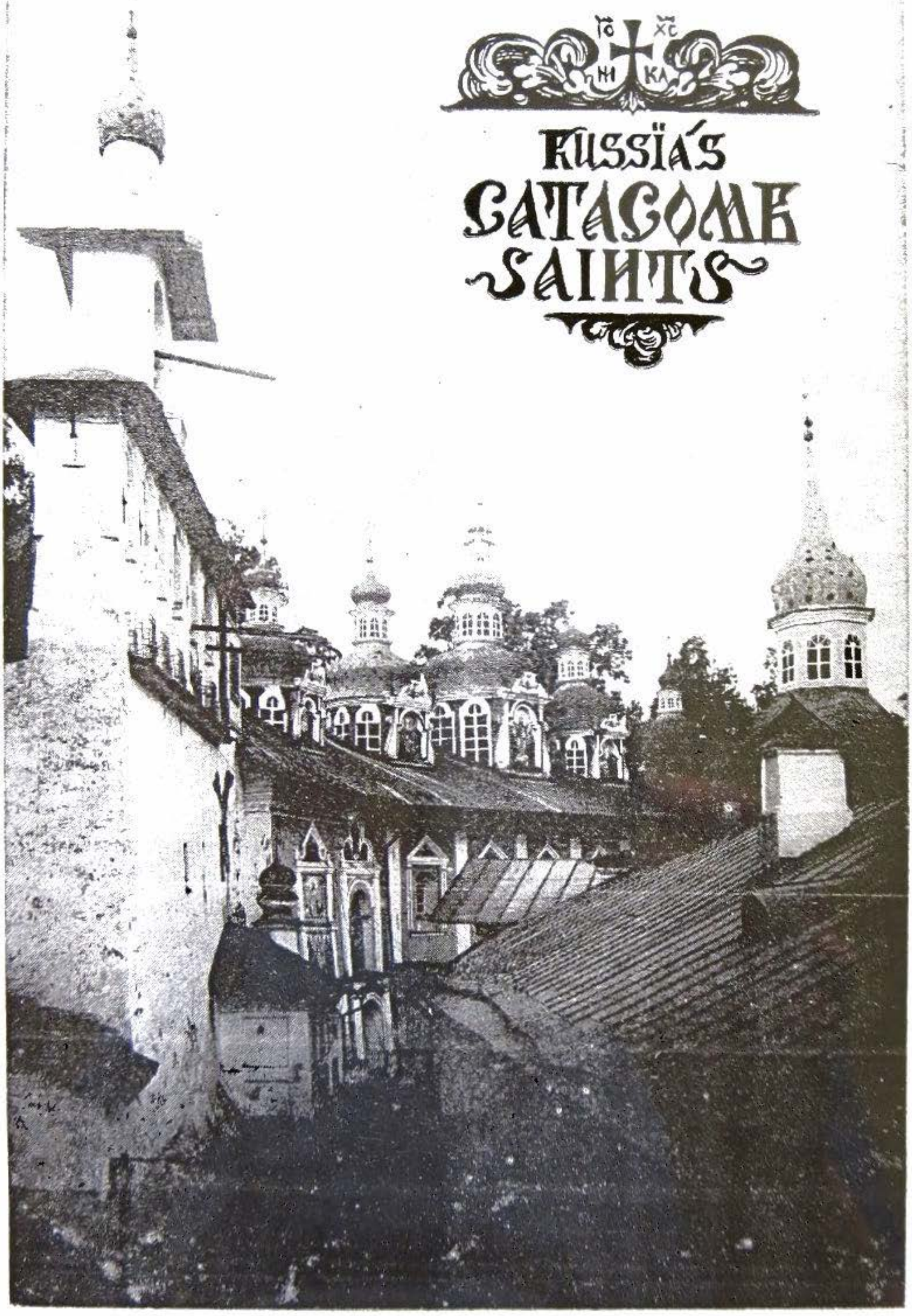

RUSSIA'S CATACOMB SAINTS

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COVER: Pskov-Caves Monastery, near Pskov: Corridor leading down to the caves where the New-Martyr Schema-Bishop Macarius is buried (see p. 14).

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RUSSIA'S CATACOMB SAINTS

THE HEROIC EXPLOIT of Russia's New Martyrs is something that has hardly begun to be told. A number of first-hand accounts exist in the West, such as the one presented in this issue of *The Orthodox Word*. But does the Russian Church *today* live by the blood of her martyrs, as the early Christians did? The Moscow Patriarchate denies that martyrs exist, and it was too much to hope that in present conditions we would ever know this secret part of the life of the persecuted Catacomb or True Orthodox Church.

Therefore it can only be by the special mercy of God that in the first months of 1972 two extremely important underground (*samizdat*) documents have reached the West from the USSR, the authors of which declare that they "consider it a sacred duty to bear witness of the continuing existence of the 'Catacomb' Church," to which they belong. These documents, *Russia and the Church Today* and *Church and Authority*, deal with the crucial question of "Sergianism" and will be printed soon in *The Orthodox Word*. For now let us only quote their testimony of Russia's New Martyrs, which strikingly reveals the hidden depth of true Orthodoxy in Russia today.

Declaring decisively that "Sergianism is outside the Church," that it has "perverted the doctrine concerning the Holy Church," the authors state: "Concerning this, witness is borne by the exploit of martyrdom and confession of the saints who have left the Sergianist church organization." "The Soviet church has renounced the very martyrs and confessors of the Russian Church, the numberless choirs of which adorn her and are her glory. But we believe that our true holy hierarchs — Vladimir, Peter, Cyril, Joseph, Benjamin — and with them the great multitude of other known and unknown hierarchs, monks, and laymen headed by Patriarch Tikhon stand before the Throne of God glorifying God and praying for the Russian Church, the Russian land, and the whole world. And it cannot be doubted that it is by their righteous prayers and the prayers of other saints and the present-day confession of those who are for the most part unknown to the world, that the Russian Church stands."

ST. MACARIUS THE ROMAN

Commemorated on August 15

KONTAKION, TONE 4

HAVING LEFT thy homeland, O blessed one,* thou didst settle in the wilderness on an island in the marshes of Lezna,* and there thou didst manifest a life of severity,* and having astounded many by thy life,* thou didst receive from Christ the gift of miracles.* Remember us who revere thy memory as we call to thee:* Rejoice, O Macarius our father.

THE LIFE OF

Saint Macarius the Roman

WONDERWORKER OF NOVGOROD

By ANIMPODIST KOROLKOV

This rare Life* *is dedicated to the growing number of all those "converts" of today and tomorrow who, like St. Macarius himself, by God's grace have come to see the error of the Western confessions and have left them to join the one saving Church of Christ, Holy Orthodoxy. May our Lord, through the prayers of their patron, St. Macarius the Roman, give them the courage and perseverance to follow this path to the end and bring forth abundant spiritual fruit.*

AMONG THE GOD-PLEASING SAINTS who have shone forth in the wide land of Novgorod the Great, there are two foreigners, natives of Rome, who founded monasteries that became seedbeds of faith and enlightenment, strongholds of Orthodoxy. They came to Russia in search of Orthodoxy, which, their hearts told them, had disappeared from Rome. One of them, St. Anthony the Roman, came in the 12th century, when the schism of the Roman Church had become final, and founded a monastery in Novgorod on the banks of the Volkhov River; and the other, St. Macarius the Roman, came in the 16th century, when the apostasy of Rome had produced the disorders of the Protestant Reformation, and founded a monastery in the region of what was later to become the capital, Petersburg, on the banks of the small river Lezna. This latter monastery, the St. Macarius Hermitage, is 75 miles from Novgorod and 65 miles from Petersburg.

The great lamp of the Orthodox Church, St. Macarius, the wonderworker of Novgorod, was born at the end of the 15th century in the noisy capital of the West, Rome, in a wealthy and renowned family. The pious parents brought up their first-born son in the strict laws of religion and gave him a brilliant scientific education according to the standards of that time. Endowed by nature with a great mind, an enviable future in public service lay before the young Roman. But the youth did not desire perishable glory, did not seek honors, but rather thirsted for another kind of life, a contemplative and spiritual life.

* From the church periodical *Russki Palomnik,* 1895, no. 32; slightly revised.

Having attained mature years and renounced all comforts and enjoyments, he resolved to devote himself to the service, not of the passing world, but of its Creator, Almighty God. The study of Holy Scripture and the writings of the Holy Fathers were the constant occupation of the future ascetic. His dream was to live according to the teaching of the Holy Church, to appropriate for himself her truths and dogmas and gradually to prepare himself for a strict ascetic life; and this dream took complete hold of his heart and soul.

But the Church of the West, to which he belonged by birth, at that time was full of outward rebellion and inward disorder, and it could not keep hold of the ardent mind of the young theologian; its rules and rites did not seem to him to be pure and flawless.

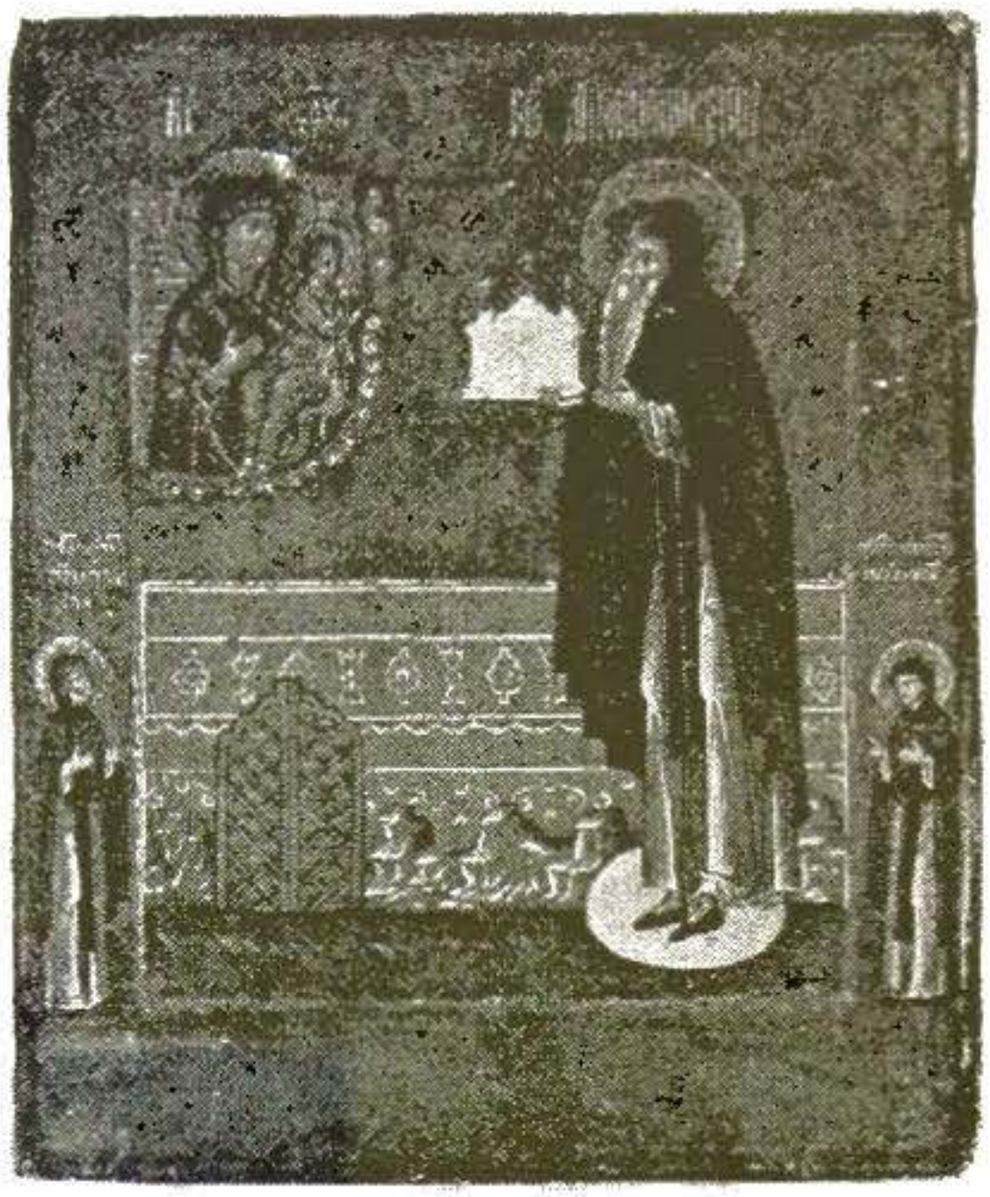
With pain in his heart the Lord's zealot looked at the religious life of proud Rome, puffed up with its false might, and at the schism which had broken out among its leading hierarchs and spiritual children. The future ascetic sorrowed and with tears begged God to show him the true path to salvation in the midst of a church which was plunged in the darkness of sin and worldly vanity, but was still the church in which he had been born; and the Lord did not reject the entreaty of His chosen one. He opened his spiritual eyes to the only Church which offers salvation, which had been glorified by the Councils of Holy Fathers for her correctness, for the immutability of her dogmas and teaching, the Church sanctified by the labors of asceticism and prayer of her great men — the Eastern Orthodox Church.

"Only under her holy protection, among her children, will I find salvation," he thought, and secretly he left Rome, distributing his wealth to the poor, leaving his relatives and close ones. With the staff of a pilgrim, in an old garment, without funds, trusting only in the Lord, the young confessor of God's law and righteousness set out for a distant land, unknown to him — for Holy Russia.

The path of the ascetic for the Lord's sake was difficult. He suffered much while travelling, until finally he reached what for him was a promised land, an Orthodox land — the northern parts of Russia, in the region of Novgorod the Great. Here the splendor of the churches and the great number of monasteries, the strict life of the monks, the solemnity and fervency of the Divine services — all left a deep impression on the foreigner.

What must have been his astonishment, and what consolation it must have given him, to discover that one of the leading monasteries of Novgorod had been founded three centuries earlier by one like himself in spirit and circumstances, his own compatriot, who was revered in Novgorod as a saint of the Orthodox Church — ST. ANTHONY THE ROMAN.

Saint Anthony the Roman
Wonderworker of Novgorod



17th-century icon depicting St. Anthony standing on the rock that brought him to the walls of Novgorod, where he founded a monastery, which he dedicates to the Mother of God by offering Her a symbolic miniature of it.

The Cathedral dedicated to the Nativity of the Theotokos
in the Monastery of St. Anthony. Begun in 1117.

The board pathway leading through the marshes to the little island where St. Macarius built his first cell and laid the foundation of his monastery.

Born in 1067 in Rome of wealthy Orthodox parents, St. Anthony was tonsured a monk at the age of 19 in one of the many Greek monasteries of Italy which had not followed the Pope of Rome into heresy. For several years he lived a strict hermitic life in this monastery, living most of the time alone in his cell, and coming to pray together with the other brethren and receive Holy Communion on Great Saturday and Pascha. When the Pope began a persecution against the monks, they fled in all directions. St. Anthony, going from place to place, came finally to a rock at the edge of the sea, and there he lived for a year in prayer and fasting. But then a storm arose on the sea, and the rock was torn from its place by the waves, and the Saint found himself sailing on the sea, miraculously unharmed. In this miraculous way he arrived in Novgorod in 1106, thanking God for His wondrous Providence in bringing him to an Orthodox land. With the blessing of St. Nicetas, Bishop of Novgorod, he built a church on the river Volkhov dedicated to the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos, on which feast he had gone to live on his rock. Within a year local fishermen brought up in their nets a barrel containing valuables from his parents' estate, which he had thrown into the sea in

Italy, and with them he built a monastery, where he was abbot until his repose in 1147, on August 3, on which day he is commemorated by the Orthodox Church.

On completing his pilgrimage to the monasteries of Novgorod, St. Macarius came to the monastery of St. Alexander on the banks of the river Svir, where the Saint himself, the founder of the monastery, was still abbot.

St. Alexander, weighed down by years and illness, joyously greeted the pilgrim who had come from afar to live in the Svir Monastery as a novice and disciple of its great abbot. After blessing his good intention, St. Alexander, in spiritual converse, revealed and explained to him what it was that his heart and soul were thirsting for, thus receiving the Western convert into the bosom of Holy Orthodoxy and guiding him in the life of the Church's highest ideal: monasticism.

The traveller from Rome did not spend much time as a disciple of the abbot of Svir. Following the example of many like himself who were spiritual children of the holy abbot, he resolved, after being tonsured a monk with the name Macarius, to shut himself up in a recluse's cell for life and bury himself to everything that suggested the world.

After visiting once more the holy places of Novgorod which had become so dear to him, he chose for himself in the region of Novgorod an impenetrable forested marshland which spread out for several miles along the shores of the river Lezna; and here, on a small island in the marsh, he built a cell.

BURNING WITH LOVE for God, crying out with tears over his sins, exhausting his flesh and humbling his spirit, in the severe labors of vigil, fasting, and unceasing prayer, removed from the world, unknown to men, living on the meager fruits and grasses of the severe wilderness — St. Macarius spent a long time in the hope of attaining the Kingdom of Heaven on the path he had chosen, the path of sorrow and deprivation.

But the wilderness could not conceal the great ascetic. Almighty God desired to reveal him to the world and through him to bring many to God-pleasing life and to the salvation of their souls.

Late one inclement night St. Macarius was standing at prayer. Someone knocked at the door of his cell, begging him to open in the name of God. The ascetic yielded to the entreaty, and several unknown people entered his cell — hunters, to judge from their clothing, and evidently tired to exhaustion. The desert-dweller, in accordance with monastic custom, greeted them

with peace. "The Saint's face shone with a special light of God's grace, like the face of an angel," relates the writer of the Saint's Life; "and the few words of his greeting evoked a wondrous grace in the hearts of those who had entered." Astonished at the divine appearance of the ascetic, and having asked his blessing, they told him: "Only by your prayers, O man of God, did the merciful Lord help us to find your cell and get to it without perishing in these forest marshes where we had come to hunt."

"It is not my sinful prayers, but the good will of the Almighty which has directed you here!" the Saint replied humbly, offering the travellers food from his meager stores. Having showed the exhausted travellers much kindness, St. Macarius calmed them and, after a brief conversation with them and common prayer, and having blessed them, he sent them off, showing them the way out of the marsh.

On leaving his cell the hunters were astonished alike at the modest humility and at the mind of the solitary desert-dweller. "They were also astonished," relates the writer of the Saint's Life, "at the patience of the ascetic of God; it seemed to them incredible that he could survive surrounded on all sides by a marsh from which there arose clouds of mosquitoes and flies which sting a man quite painfully."

But what seemed impossible for simple people of the world was indeed the fortunate lot of God's chosen one. He patiently bore everything: hunger and thirst, summer heat and winter cold. He lived only for God, for the spiritual, heavenly world, and not for the world that passes; and the Lord helped him. In the old manuscript Life of the Saint it is related that even the wild animals who frequently visited the Saint did not touch him; without fear he stroked bears and fed them from his hands just as one would a domestic animal.

Over one thing only was the Saint concerned now: his peace and silence might be broken by people, for his refuge had become known. And indeed, soon the report of the ascetic's holy life amidst the forest marshes of the river Lezna attracted many who thirsted for his counsel, instructive teaching, and prayers. The Saint did not refuse his spiritual help to the suffering, but his renown weighed upon him and he decided to leave the place of his first solitary ascetic labors.

St. Macarius, on leaving his island, settled even deeper in the forest marsh. Choosing a small, slightly elevated place surrounded by a dense, tall forest on the left bank of the Lezna, he built himself here a second humble cell. But here too the Saint could not long conceal himself from the world.

In wondrous fashion the Lord revealed to people his new refuge. "By his ascetic labors," we read in the Saint's manuscript Life, "he attracted to this place a special grace of God which was manifested to the inhabitants thereabouts sometimes in the form of a fiery pillar which was visible to many at night, and sometimes in the form of a cloud of fragrant smoke which ascended to the sky and poured out fragrance throughout the area."

These manifestations made the local inhabitants penetrate into the depths of the wilderness, and there, "having been saddened by the first departure of the Saint, being deprived of his sweet conversation," with joy they found him again. "Then finally they understood those wondrous manifestations of the fiery pillar and the smoke of incense which had drawn them there, and they began to revere the man of God even more."

Great was the love of the people for St. Macarius. Many did not leave his wilderness for long periods; and some ardently begged him to allow them to stay with him for life and build themselves cells near his modest dwelling. "And then the Saint saw that he had not the strength to refuse their entreaties, and that this was the Lord's will." Having fervently prayed to the heavenly Creator, he gave permission for the zealots of ascetic labor and monastic life to build cells, and thus he laid the foundation for his desert monastery.

The brethren who assembled soon built a small wooden church in honor of the Dormition of the All Holy Mother of God. This was about in the year 1540. The first abbot was the Saint himself, ordained to holy orders by Macarius, Bishop of Novgorod, who later became the celebrated Metropolitan of All Russia.

Showing himself to be an example for the brethren, the Saint in truth was a "good pastor." Laboring for many years in "good and unflagging labors," and having acquired the gift of clairvoyance and miracle-working, he travelled resolutely the path of asceticism, guiding many. Humbling himself, exhausting himself with labors and vigils of prayer, he zealously planted and strengthened the Faith of Christ in this region, instructing the brethren not to grow faint in emulating him.

Not long before his repose, St. Macarius, having given over the direction of the monastery to one of his disciples, went off to the little island which he loved so much, the place of his first asceticism, and there he peacefully reposed in the Lord, having given his blessing to the brethren and entrusted his young monastery to the will of Almighty God. This was shortly after the year 1550, on the 15th of August, the Dormition of the Theotokos.

With lamentation the monks buried their beloved abbot by the wall of the Dormition church which he had founded, on the left side outside.

THE MONASTERY founded by St. Macarius from the very first days of its existence was distinguished, not for its material well-being or large number of monks, but for the high spiritual life of the brethren, who were seeking not corruptible wealth but the Kingdom of Heaven. St. Macarius' testament to his monastery was the splendor of the Divine services, the strict attention to the Rule and the monastic vows, missionary activity, the spiritual enlightenment of the region and responsiveness to its needs; and this testament was sacredly kept.

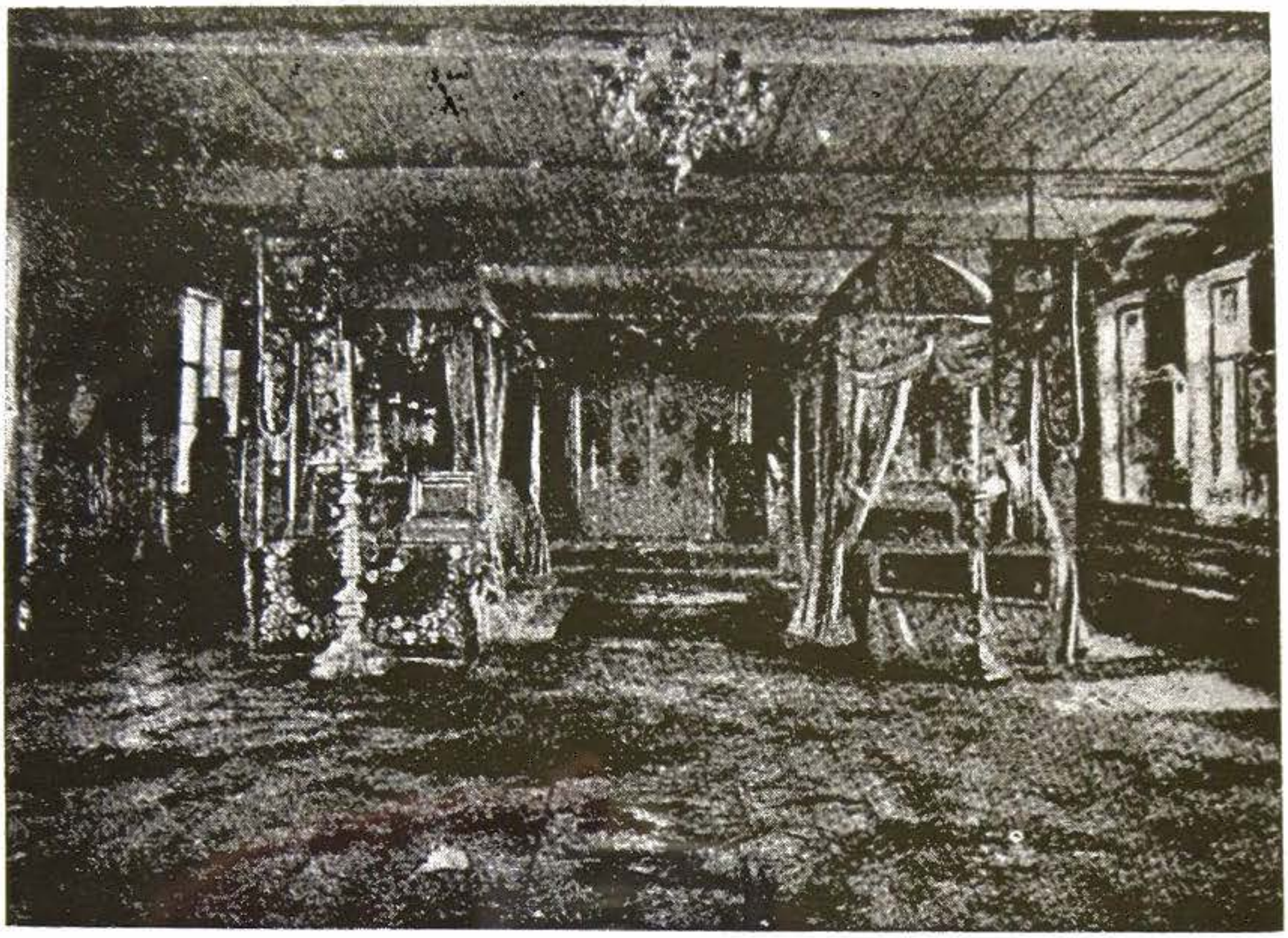
Through the zeal of pious benefactors, soon after the Saint's repose a second wooden church, dedicated to St. Sabbatius of Solovki, was erected near the Dormition church; and the whole number of monastic buildings was limited to these two churches, a few essential constructions, and three monastic cells. The monastery's holdings in land were also not large.

No official historical records have been preserved of the St. Macarius Hermitage. It lived its own secluded life, its abbots were not chosen for high positions in the hierarchy and were not invited to ecclesiastical or State gatherings; but faithful to the testament of its founder, it went its own narrow, thorny path, far from everything worldly.

In the sad Time of Troubles, the monastery of St. Macarius suffered the same fate as the other monasteries of the Novgorod region. In 1615 the Swedish troops, having plundered the churches and monasteries of Novgorod, likewise laid waste St. Macarius' monastery. The monks fell under the swords of the enemy, and the churches and monastery buildings, including the library with its manuscripts, perished in flames.

Re-established soon after this, the Hermitage never had much income, and by the first half of the 18th century it lost its independence, becoming a holding of the St. Alexander Nevsky Lavra in Petersburg. Under Catherine's persecution of monasticism it was abolished altogether in 1764 and turned into a parish church, and later it lost even this significance and was threatened with complete oblivion. Its buildings were falling into ruin and services were held only on the Saint's feast days at the request of the local inhabitants and pilgrims who still came to venerate the Saint's relics.

Then, however, around the middle of the 19th century, some pious benefactors began to repair the two churches and the miraculous spring near



Interior of the Dormition Church in 1895, the shrine over the relics of St. Macarius at the left.

the Saint's cell. This spring had been dug by the Saint himself, by whose prayers a healing, crystal-clear water gushes from it. Accounts have been preserved of the Saint's appearance to the severely ill with the counsel to drink water from this well with prayer, and the sick, obeying this counsel, have obtained relief and often complete healing from their infirmities. Pilgrims to the Hermitage always used to take back with them some of this healing water in small glass jars. They would come by the thousands on the monastery's feast days — August 15 and January 19 (the Saint's namesday).

Shortly after the churches were repaired one old priest settled near them and celebrated Divine services there until his death. Finally, in 1894, the Hermitage of St. Macarius once again became a functioning monastery, having a missionary purpose for the fighting of sectarianism in the region, under the direction of its abbot, the well-known missionary, Hieromonk Arsenius.

St. Macarius' Hermitage was once again destroyed by the Soviets, the new northern barbarians, in 1932, but the memory of its founder, St. Macarius, lives still and testifies to how wondrous God is in His saints. To our God, glorified in the Holy Trinity, may there be glory forever. Amen.

SCHEMA-BISHOP MACARIUS
THE LAST ABBOT OF ST. MACARIUS HERMITAGE

Pskov-Caves Monastery: St. Lazarus church with adjacent Refectory building where Schema-Bishop Macarius was killed in one of the ground-floor cells

Schema-Bishop Macarius

THE WANDERING CATACOMB BISHOP

All that is known to us of Schema-Bishop Macarius is contained in the two testimonies that follow; but this little is already enough to present a picture of a holy man, a new martyr of the 20th-century catacombs which are described here. Both testimonies are by Orthodox Russians who themselves experienced the Communist Yoke and escaped to the West during the Second World War and wrote of their experience. Both accounts are first-hand; the details of Bishop Macarius' catacomb life given in the second account were heard by Fr. Gerasim from the Bishop's own lips.

IN THE VICINITY of Petrograd in the early 1930's a small monastery still remained, where many came on pilgrimage — the Hermitage of St. Macarius the Roman.

Early one morning we boarded a train and travelled to the Liuban station. There were thirty of us making a pilgrimage. Having stopped to drink some tea at the monastery metochion in town, we started out on foot for the monastery.

At first the way lay through fields. Around us ears of rye swayed in unison, then we passed rustling fields of oat, then pink fields of buckwheat upon which the passing wind made violet-colored waves. Being city dwellers, we rejoiced in the open spaces, the sun, nature.

Having rested in a village, we entered the forest. Father P., who led us, began to recite by heart the Akathist to the Mother of God Joy of All Who Sorrow. Everybody caught up the refrain and later the canticles of the canon. The prayer lasted for a long time; finally the last note died away, but the forest still continued to stretch out just as dense and endless as ever. Everyone was tired and grew silent. Our feet began to ache and swell. Our shoes rubbed our heels until they hurt. Our bodies ached.

We walked and walked — there was no end to the dense green forest. Already dusk was descending, and we still did not know how far we had to

go. From one side of the forest the moon appeared; its rays mingled with the twilight, while we continued to walk. Finally we came on a clearing in the forest. Down the hill there ran a small stream, and farther on there appeared a log church. Against the sky a bell-tower was silhouetted, under which was the dark roof of the monastery buildings. And then from a distance there came to us the thin sound of the monastery bell. We hadn't heard a monastery bell for so long, and everyone came to life and almost at a run descended the slope, hoping to arrive in time for the Vigil service.

Here long ago, on a tiny island of firm soil, surrounded on all sides by impenetrable bogs, St. Macarius the Roman had settled and lived a hermit's life. The closed tomb with his holy relics was located in the monastery church. On the site of his cell a small chapel had been built. The monks had drained a large space in the marsh for the church and monastery buildings, had laid out pathways, drained and cultivated parcels of land for fields and vegetable gardens. The Bolsheviks had taken over the fields, depriving the monks of their sustenance. Believers would bring from town sacks of dried bread, and the monks would process them and bake bread for the common table of monks and pilgrims.

Many paupers and fools for Christ had found refuge in the monastery. One of these was Misha, who was well known to everyone from the Alexander Nevsky Lavra in Petrograd. His loud voice was familiar to us, and we respected this white-haired old man with youthful black eyes. I remember when once the doctor had done a bad job of extracting one of my teeth, and my jaw was swollen for several months and hurt a great deal. I had to wear a bandage. Misha came to me once during the Liturgy and whispered into my ear: "Go to Novodevichy Convent, take oil from the vigil lamp before the icon of the Martyr Antipas and anoint your cheek with it. Look at you — you think you're smart, going to get healed by a doctor." I turned around, but he was already gone. So I went to the Liturgy at Novodevichy Convent, but the nuns who were selling candles did not even know where they had an icon of the Martyr Antipas. We barely managed to find a small icon. I did as Misha had told me: anointed the cheek with oil and took some oil from the vigil lamp with me. And soon everything passed away: the inflammation disappeared and the jaw stopped hurting. This same Misha had previously been an atheist intellectual, an engineer. But when the Lord touched his soul, this shocked him so much that he took upon himself a severe ascetic way of life and became a fool for Christ. After my meeting with him in the

(*Continued on page* 28)

The Counsels of the Elder Nazarius

VIII

CONCERNING TRAPEZA (MEALS)

IF YOU ARE ABLE to restrain yourself in such a way that you take food only once a day, and that after sunset, then arrange this for yourself with the counsel and the blessing of an elder who has acquired experience and discernment. However, how you should act with regard to this will be said below at the end of this instruction.

But if you are not able to eat only once, then as soon as the time comes for trapeza, enter the refectory with everyone else. Do not separate yourself from the brethren.

If it should be your turn to serve the brethren at table, appear with all reverence and fear and joy. Serve entirely as if you were serving Christ Himself and His Angels, and not men.

Have a good disposition and warm love toward all the brethren. Have a joyful heart, eye, and face, being filled with spiritual reverence; attach yourself firmly with your soul to the whole brotherhood and serve it sincerely, without any hypocrisy. Do not permit yourself to think that for this you will receive praise from anyone, but imagine that you are serving God and His Angels, of which service you are entirely unworthy; but glorify God, that the Lord has granted you this service.

Watch diligently lest the proud and vainglorious thought should set itself against you, that in serving the brethren you are doing everything well. Try your best not to permit in yourself the working of the useless, evil, and soul-destroying thought of vainglory. For it artfully enters the soul of a man, so that sometimes he does not notice at all how this thought of his raises itself up and prepares his fall.

Pride settles into a man when he does not yet know himself perfectly. And so, know yourself, and guard yourself by every means from pride and

vainglory, as from a great harm for the soul. But you cannot banish them from yourself by any means except by ceaseless self-reproach and belittling yourself.

Dispose yourself in such a way that with your whole heart you can say interiorly: I am not only unworthy to sit with the brethren at table, but I am unworthy even to serve them; and I would not even be worthy to look at them, if God's mercy had not arranged this for me. Send up great thanksgiving to God that He has arranged this for you.

If you are honored to sit together with everyone at table, then think to yourself: Who am I, unworthy one, who have entered here? And how is it that I wish to have a part at table with the holy fathers? Thinking thus to yourself, present yourself as the most sinful of all, a stranger, foreigner, and pauper. And, sitting at table with the brethren, have fear and shame before them, as if you sat before kings and princes. Make yourself devoid of boldness for anything or before anyone. Always choose for yourself the lowest and if possible the last place. Do not look around you anywhere at all, and do not be curious. Do not look at how anyone sits, or at how he eats or drinks.

Try your best not to have most harmful impudence; do not presume, before the blessing of the priest or an elder brother, to touch anything on the table. Even though there may be present those younger than you, nonetheless reflect that you are unworthy to begin to eat or drink before your brother. Wait until everyone else begins to eat or drink, and then you too eat with thanksgiving, with humility and reverence.

Try your best to eat whatever food there is — whether it be tasty or not, whatever it might be, whether anyone be given much or little; but strive to have a pure mind.

Do not let out of your thoughts prayer to the Lord Jesus, and on your tongue mix it with the food; that is, have the food in your mouth diluted with prayer. From such a dilution you will not taste any unpleasant taste in the food, and you will not envy anyone or anything, whether others are given much or little. Believe firmly that Jesus will sweeten in your throat the food you are offered, and everything will be pleasant to you.

Reproach yourself, reflecting that you are unworthy of such communion; and give thanks, partaking of the common table with the brethren.

Watch carefully lest any murmuring or envy touch your lips, with the thought of eating more of some better food. But if you should happen to

experience such a thought in your mind, then deprive yourself altogether of better food, or do not let yourself eat at all that day, so that in future your mind will not presume to accept such a pleasure-loving desire.

And so, partake of the dishes which are offered in silence and with prayer, and do everything as written above. At the same time guard yourself carefully also in this: Satisfy your body with food in such a way that you do not feel full or heavy, but have still a little hunger and thirst. Nourish rather your soul with the God-inspired words and lives of the Holy Fathers which are read during trapeza.

Try your best to keep your soul and body together in attention and concern; nourish your body with foods, and satisfy and adorn your mental soul with Divine words.

At the same time exercise yourself in restraint from foods in the following fashion. If you wish to have perfect restraint in everything at trapeza, then begin to judge thus: While belittling yourself and with heartfelt self-reproach, as mentioned above, believe that everyone present at table is richer than you in virtues, while you are the poorest of all, the most infirm, the most sinful, and thus you should not even be sitting with others at table, or even presume to look at them. Together with these thoughts, bring to mind your sins and your infirmity, and say mentally: Will it not be for my condemnation if I touch the foods that are offered? How is it that the holy fathers bear me and have mercy on me? Am I worthy to sit next to them and partake of the food given by God to righteous men? By my life from my youth up I have greatly angered God my Creator, being a transgressor of His holy commandments. Do you not stand self-condemned in your sins, O my soul? Think, accursed sinner — where are your vows to Christ and your rejection of satan and his deeds? Where is your keeping of God's commandments? Where is your emulation of Christ? Where are your virtues of body and soul which you promised with an oath to perform in Christianity? Where is the vow you gave as a monk? Where is your firm faith in God by which you can cause mountains to move? Why have you not acquired at least a little of it, as a mustard seed? Where is your perfect repentance and your separation from every evil word and deed? Where is your contrition of soul, your lamentation, deeds of mercy, purity of heart, and abstinence from evil thoughts? Where is your dispassion to everything and your perfect love for God and your neighbor? Where is your humility, for the sake of which we become worthy to become sons in eternity? Where is your patience with thanksgiving?

Where is the unceasing prayer on your lips and in your heart which Jesus has commanded? Where are your heartfelt tears and your lamentations of repentance? Where is your unceasing remembrance of death and the Last Judgment? Where is your constant remembrance of the reward prepared for the righteous and of the eternal torture awaiting sinners? Where, O man, is your care to remain day and night in unceasing concern for your soul and to keep the Lord's commandments, which are dearer than gold and precious stones? O accursed one! Be fearful lest you perish in the portion of the evil; be zealous for good and live righteously.

Examine whether you be worthy to take your fill together with the holy ones! It would behoove you first of all to repent and beg mercy and receive perfect forgiveness from God Who loves mankind, and then you could worthily eat bread and rejoice with the holy fathers. But you who have not brought forth perfect repentance — how do you presume to partake of and rejoice in the good things prepared for righteous men?

Having reflected thus, at least say to yourself from your whole soul and with heartfelt sorrow: Eat, unworthy one, enough so that you will not die. Dry up your body; confine your insatiable desires; grieve and belittle yourself. Will not the most merciful Lord look down upon this grief and contrition of my heart which are justly deserved? Even though my contrition itself is imperfect and insufficient, will not God Who is endless in mercy still have mercy on me and forgive the great evils that I have done?

Constantly reflecting thus and reproaching yourself, decide for yourself how much you should eat and drink every day to satisfy the needs of nature. Avoid as much as possible not merely overeating, but even eating just enough to be full. Keep in mind what was said above, that one should eat and drink only to the point where one is still a little hungry and thirsty.

At the same time keep constantly in mind Christ the Saviour and reflect thus: How much He suffered for me, a lawless one; He endured not only hunger and thirst, but also great tortures, and crucifixion, and death for my lawlessness. And yet I, negligent one, overflowing with sins and lawlessness, do not wish to endure for the sake of my own forgiveness and salvation? Try your best, with God's help, to acquire patience in the enduring of deprivations and sorrows; ask, knock, seek day and night; and you will obtain from Christ the Saviour help and strength to endure, if you desire this with your whole heart and soul.

With such God-pleasing dispositions, in eating from the table guard yourself against attachment to better or more tasty foods. Beware of this evil serpent who whispers to you as to Eve. To Adam and Eve the forbidden fruit seemed beautiful to look at and good to eat; but inasmuch as they did not wish to deprive themselves of tasting this fruit, they were deprived of much else and were banished from paradise. Therefore, if one food presents itself to your eyes and mind as better than another, and the thought occurs to you: leave this one alone and take your fill of that better food — then try your best to overcome such a thought and desire. Reproach yourself and think that you are not worthy of that food and drink. And therefore offer it to your neighbor, but yourself do not eat or drink it at all; for your thought desires it by reason of passion. Beware lest through your dainty foods heartfelt contrition be driven out of you. For it is from the passionate desire for pleasant food and drink that evil and soul-destroying excess in eating and drinking are born. Strive by means of self-restraint to bridle yourself a little and thus preserve yourself from a greater attachment.

In order to strengthen yourself in self-restraint, reflect that he who desires to receive from God the forgiveness of sins and purification and to have peace in heaven with Christ, must unfailingly refrain not only from great passionate desires, but from small ones as well, and even from mental attachments. Reflect always to yourself on the words of Holy Scripture, that nothing defiled or unclean can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven (Apoc. 21:27).

Pay attentive heed also to this: If you are sitting with the brethren at table and wish to restrain yourself and the brethren begin to offer you some food and drink, bow to them, saying nothing. But if they again begin to force you to take something, then again bow your head and reply in a meek and quiet voice: Forgive me, but I am already full enough. Keep this in mind, that everywhere and concerning everything you should answer the brethren meekly and quietly.

Pay attentive heed also to this: If a brother or one of the pilgrims should come and visit you for the love of God or on some business before the Liturgy, do not dare to permit eating or drinking with them. And act the same way if anyone comes to you after dinner as well.

If you have the strength for it and can restrain yourself, then refrain from supper in the evening. But if you should go to the refectory for supper in order to conceal your self-restraint from the brethren, then go to the refectory and strive to serve the brethren with love in some way in place of supper.

But if as a part of your duty or for some other reason it be required of you that you sit with the brethren, then take a little food infrequently so as only to give the appearance that you are eating. Do not forget at this time also what was said concerning dinner: satisfy your body with foods, but nourish your soul with prayer and discernment, or listen attentively to the reading from the lives of the Holy Fathers and make use of them. Likewise, unceasingly reproach yourself and represent yourself as unworthy of these services or of sitting with the brethren.

Do not seek the first place; guard yourself even from desiring it. Reflect that the presumption of being in the first place is the first and cunning beginning of pride, and that from such presumption great pride also is born. In everything strive with your whole soul to have humility. Keep in mind always these words of Christ the Saviour that *whosoever exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted* (St. Luke 14:11).

Keep this also in mind: that every evil and diabolic passion in a man is born secretly and settles into him through actions which in the beginning are almost imperceptible . Pay heed and know that passion takes its beginning above all from lack of self-restraint and from filling one's stomach. It is in this net that a man is caught most of all and soonest. This beginning of passion presents itself in appearance as something good, pleasant, and commendable; but it has in itself the hidden poison of all fatal passions. If a man becomes infected with it, many labors will be required to remove it from himself. Whoever will submit to this passion and not reject it with whatever strength he has, is in danger of falling deeply; but whoever restrains himself from it is safe from many passions and will remain unwounded.

Many suffer from gluttony and fall into the pit of love of pleasure, so that they lead a worldly life and not a monastic one, having forgotten their monastic vows. And anyone who, having entered monasticism, begins to grieve that he is not enjoying a worldly life of luxury, is near to ruinous passions. Know that lack of self-restraint in food and dainties is the mother of many vices. And thus, discerning that this soul-harming evil leads a man to the abyss, try your best, O beloved brother, to preserve yourself from it. Do not fill yourself with food and drink, and do not give enjoyment to your stomach, lest you die (spiritually). For if you allow yourself to become accustomed to gluttony, you will have to employ many labors and much patience to be delivered from it and to become strengthened in self-restraint.

And pay firm heed also to this: If you begin to keep yourself diligently according to this instruction, the envious demon will not endure it and will either raise against you temptations from the superior, in order to test your humility and fortitude, or else will arm against you those who are living hypocritically and negligently, and they will begin to reproach and abuse you, and perhaps also to hit, despise, and hate you and thus cause you many sorrows. But in such a case attach yourself all the more to silence and humility. Keep unceasingly the prayer of the Lord Jesus on your lips and in the depths of your heart, so that you will not in the least murmur against them for this nor be at all offended. Accept everything with thanksgiving, reflecting to yourself: How can I, accursed one, become angry in vain at my brother? And at the same time unceasingly keep in mind your own sins; for you too, even if you haven't hit anyone, have reproached, spoken ill of, ridiculed, and by your abuse have wounded your neighbor, and by offending your neighbor you have risen up against Christ the Saviour and wounded Him. Therefore with your whole soul you should acknowledge yourself as worthy of enduring more than you already endure; remember the words which Christ the Saviour spoke concerning a good deed done to one's neighbor, words which should apply equally to every offensive word or deed against one's neighbor. Whatever you have done to your neighbor, He says, you have done to Me. At the same time remember His sufferings even unto death, His immense goodness, and His love toward us, a love that endures our unrighteousness; and consider how easy it is for you to bear small sorrows for His sake, for it will be with His sure help, if you truly desire it. If you will rightly discern in this way, and will endure with love the temptations sent you according to your deeds, you shall soon acquire the help and comfort of Christ the Saviour.

After trapeza stand up with the brethren; give thanks to God, and if a priest or the superior is present, receive his blessing; if neither is present, then bow to the brethren, thank them, and ask forgiveness. Then go in silence to your cell, shut the door, and if you can, make several prostrations with prayer and thanksgiving, and after this take a book, read a little, and reflect on what you have read.

If it is summertime and after trapeza you have need for rest from the preceding labors, then lie down in the place prepared for this and sleep a little; only try your best to keep from sleeping much. Note that if you have done everything at table as said above — if you have eaten and drunk with prayer,

eaten in moderation and risen without being full — then you will sleep a little sweet and healthful sleep and will soon arise, for your guardian angel will soon awaken you.

But if it is wintertime and you don't need sleep: then after a little prayer and reading, as said above, occupy yourself with handiwork and strive to work with your hands and have prayer inseparably on your lips and in your mind. Be careful not by any means to allow your mind to be idle; and thus spend the time.

When the time comes for evening hymnody, hasten to the beginning as was explained above. After entering the church stand with fear, pay heed to yourself, confess yourself fervently before God, and in everything do as was indicated above concerning standing in church.

If you can restrain yourself, as indicated above, so as to eat only once a day after sunset, then after sunset act thus. Go to the one of whom one should ask food, and not as a brother or novice, but as a pilgrim, and not as one who has fasted, but as if you had already eaten and are asking more.

See carefully also to this, that you come to ask food not thinking that you have earned it by labor and sweat; no, rather think that you are unworthy, but perhaps God will inform this father to give you something to eat. For this you should humble yourself with your whole soul and reproach yourself as one impatient and infirm. Having come with such a disposition, if they give you a piece of bread and some water, give thanks to God and strengthen your infirmity with them.

But if you cannot bear such self-restraint, then sit with the brethren at table and eat together with them; only maintain your self-restraint, so as not to eat to excess.

Observe this also: If you are in the monastery after vespers or after supper, if there is a special rule of prayer in church, do not be absent from this church assembly without extreme need, but participate in it with reverence and zeal just as in the other parts of the church services, as set forth above.

Orthodoxy in the Contemporary World

ARCHBISHOP, PRIEST, PARISH LEAVE METROPOLIA BECAUSE OF "MODERNISM," "RENOVATIONISM," "HERESY"

NEAR THE END of the second year of its ill-fated "autocephaly," the American Metropolia has suffered three new blows in the first two months of 1972 as its clergy and faithful continue to abandon it in order to join the Russian Church Outside of Russia, whose uncompromising stand for truth and principle is awakening the conscience alike of the older generation of Russians and the younger generation of converts.

1. The most eminent clergyman to leave the Metropolia is one of its eldest hierarchs, Archbishop Amvrosy of Pittsburgh, who was for 12 years Bishop of Sitka and Alaska, and for 7 months Bishop of Japan. He explains his action in the following text, which also sheds light on the Metropolia's past.

*The Declaration of Archbishop Amvrosy (Feb. 29|Mar. 13, 1972)**

I consider it my duty to address the Russian Orthodox clergy and people in North America. I believe that they should know the reasons that moved me to renounce my membership in the episcopate of the Orthodox Church in America and to ask to be received into the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia.

I came to America from Russia, which had been seized by the godless Communist authority after a fierce battle for liberation, in which I took part in the south of Russia... From my very arrival here I have dedicated myself to the service of God, at first as a deacon with the ever-memorable Archbishop Vitaly in the Bronx, then as a priest, ordained by Metr. Theophilus as the head of a parish in those blessed years of the peaceful development of church life when the North American Metropolitan District was a part of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia.

After the death of my wife in 1950, in three years I received the monastic tonsure, and in 1955 I was raised to the episcopate.... For these 50 years of my life and service in America I came to know and love many of our priests and devout Orthodox people who treasured the precious inheritance of the Russian Orthodox Church with her traditions and customs. Because of my ties to them I became reconciled to certain manifestations which in other circumstances I would never have tolerated.

But then two years ago the leaders of the American Metropolia hastily and without sufficient thought entered into an agreement with the Moscow Patriarchate in the person of Metropolitan Nikodim concerning the reception of autocephaly. We were offered the promise of complete independence from the influence of Moscow and the union of all Churches in America into one independent Church. I looked with alarm on these measures, but I did not

* Russian text in *Orthodox Russia*, 1972, no. 6, p. 13.

desire to evoke internal divisions which might be used to the Church's harm. Hope was kept alive that everything would turn out all right.

Unfortunately, on the contrary the warnings that had been made to us came true: that the autocephaly received from Moscow would create for the Metropolia new ties with Moscow, which would consolidate even more its influence in America. And indeed, not one Church free from Moscow has recognized the autocephaly, and the Moscow Patriarchate, despite our expectations, has retained under its authority 45 parishes and has no intention of giving them over to the new autocephalous Church.... Travels to Moscow, concelebrations, gifts, and the like, even against the wishes of certain bishops and clergy, have gradually brought more and more entanglement in a close relationship with those Moscow hierarchs who, in our common conviction, are bound by submission to the enemies of the Church.

All this called forth great sorrow in me. More and more I began to doubt the rightness of bearing responsibility for this before God and men. But to this something else was added: the danger of the so-called modernism which is being introduced into the life of our parishes.

Orthodox Christian life is founded on the overcoming by men of their inertia and the influence of the world which lies in evil. Modernism, however, on the contrary is founded on the lowering of the spiritual level in the name of adaptation to the principles of this world. Recently in the Orthodox Church in America there has been conducted with special zeal a persecution against the use of the Church-Slavonic language in Divine services, the abbreviation of services, the installation of the new Gregorian Calendar, the introduction of general in place of individual confession and the administering of Communion indiscriminately. But the mention of such manifestations in my report evoked in the Sobor of Bishops such an explosion that I felt acutely that I could no longer endure such a direction of church life and bear responsibility for it... My decision brings me no benefits, which in my declining years I do not seek. On the contrary, in a material sense I do not gain but lose; but for me the important thing is the peace of soul from again belonging to that Church which keeps the purity of Orthodoxy and the Russian Church traditions... and has preserved the testament of the martyred Patriarch Tikhon...

I have written these lines in fulfillment of my sacred duty before God, before the faithful, before America for the good things which I have received here, and before my much-suffering homeland — Russia, where I was given my life and the Holy Orthodox Faith of Christ.

2. At a general parish assembly one of the largest parishes in the Metropolia (with over 1000 members), the Holy Spirit parish of Bridgeport, Conn., elected by a two-thirds majority to join the Russian Church Outside of Russia. The parish had not accepted the new Statute of the Metropolia or the new calendar and expressed its desire for a deeper church life than the one that is being provided by the innovationism of certain Metropolia priests. The Synod of Bishops acquainted itself with the life of the parish for several months before deciding to receive it within its jurisdiction. Fr. Alexander Lebedev, a recent graduate of Holy Trinity Seminary at Jordanville, N.Y., has been assigned as the parish priest.

3. In early January the former priest of the Metropolia Sts. Peter and Paul church in Manville, N.J., Fr. George Lewis — a young convert who had been received by the Metropolia from the Uniates *as a priest* without ordination — was baptized, chrismated, and ordained as a priest in the Russian Church Outside of Russia in New York City. He is forming a new Synod parish in the area of Somerville-Bridgewater, N.J., dedicated to the great champion of Orthodoxy, St. Mark of Ephesus. Some of Fr. George's remarks in a letter to Fr. Neketas Palassis of March 4|17 express well the attitude of a growing number of the younger clergy in America today:

ARCHBISHOP AMVROSY
of Pittsburgh, Pa.,
formerly Bishop of
SITKA AND ALASKA

"Believing that outside of the Orthodox Church a man has no salvation, I slowly watched the Orthodox truth perverted in the Metropolia, and I could not remain silent or indifferent to it. Since when one comes to a knowledge of the truth, it is necessary to profess it openly, and since I saw Orthodox truth defended, lived, and propagated in its purity only in the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, I came with part of my former flock to it in January of this year.... Not understanding at first the historical background, but listening to the interpretations of Metropolia 'theologians,' I watched the Metropolia accept 'autocephaly' from the Moscow Patriarchate — which is subservient to the atheistic Soviet government, and which is now not only uncanonical but heretical, giving the Holy Mysteries to Roman Catholics and Old Believers!.... My eyes began to open to the theologically bankrupt basis of the Metropolia, which prays and flirts with heretics in the WCC and NCC, and which borders on Renovationism, modernism, and now ecumenism. Monasticism is a mockery within the Metropolia.... Many of the Synod's enemies accuse it of being a 'sect' or a 'cult' — but look at the accusors; each one has his own 'sect' or 'cult'... proclaiming loudly a Gospel not found in the Divine Scriptures or Holy Tradition. Keep up your dedicated work—and I too am ready to give my life for what I know to be the Truth!"

And thus, as men of conscience depart from her for her lukewarmness and apostasy, the Metropolia finds it ever more difficult to keep up the pretense of being Orthodox. In her, rather, are being fulfilled our Saviour's words in the parable of the talents: *Unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath* (St. Matt. 25:29).

(*Continued from page* 16)

monastery he disappeared. We heard that he had been arrested and shot at the whim of an interrogator.

It was a very difficult and frightful time when I visited the monastery. "Pray to St. Macarius and the Iveron Mother of God!" Father N. consoled me. The icon of the Iveron Mother of God at the monastery was a special one. The Holy Virgin was painted in full monastic attire in mantle and with a prayer-rope in her hands.

The superior of the monastery, Bishop Macarius, had taken the schema, hardly ever left his cell, and rarely conversed with the pilgrims, except for some of his spiritual children. Several times we met him in the corridor and in church. But finally I had the opportunity to visit him and talk with him. Closed-up, serious, sad, he made a strong impression on the pilgrims; and if anyone conducted himself noisily or in general unbecomingly, or missed church services, Vladika through his cell-attendant asked such a person to leave the monastery. Young people were rather afraid of him and tried hard not to infringe the strict monastic rules.

Matins began at four o'clock in the morning, followed by the early Liturgy. There followed, at nine o'clock, the late Liturgy and a moleben, which ended between noon and one o'clock. Then there was the meal. At four o'clock there was Vespers or the Vigil service, an akathist, and after it a requiem service. The services ended between eight and nine o'clock in the evening. After this there was supper, and around midnight Nocturnes.

After spending some time, I finally had to go back to the city. At the station town, in the metochion church, I attended the All-night Vigil. For a long time I knelt before the icon of St. Macarius. It appeared that with his look he encouraged me. And indeed, everything went well, and I returned without being arrested.

We visited the Hermitage several more times. In a severe frost at the end of the Nativity Fast we arrived at the monastery in order to be with the monks on the feast of St. Macarius. Father P. wished to receive the sacrament of Unction from Vladika. Our clergy gave Unction not only to the seriously ill; in those frightful times everyone lived under the constant threat of sudden violent death, or else in conditions where it was impossible to receive the holy Sacraments. Monks and some of the believing laymen usually gathered during the Nativity Fast or the Great Lent to receive Unction.

That day Father P. served the Liturgy in the small church on the site of the Saint's wilderness cell. Vladika Macarius came to pray together with us. At the direction of Father P. I came up to Vladika for a blessing and presented Father P.'s request for Unction.

"Why does Father P. wish the Unction so much?" asked the Bishop. "He has a heavy weight on his soul," I answered. Vladika looked at me sternly, and suddenly tears gushed from his eyes. He began to sob uncontrollably. "If you only knew what heavy trials lie ahead for us, how much suffering and torment! Our monastery will be devastated, our sacred things defiled!"

He continued to sob. A frightened novice was about to run up to Vladika, but Father P. restrained him. They all left quietly.

I stood before the sorrowing hierarch, profoundly shaken, seized by a presentiment of an approaching storm. He spoke as if to himself, oblivious of me. Then he gradually came to himself, walked up to the icon of the Saint, kissed it, left the church, and set out along the path to the monastery. His tall, dark figure stood out sharply against the pure white sheet of snow, which glistened under the bright rays of the winter sun.

Within a year his prophecy was fulfilled. The arrests of "Holy Night" (when thousands of the clergy and faithful were arrested in one night) broke out and swept from the face of the earth all the remaining monasteries and monastic and lay communities. That night I also was arrested.

Vladika was sent to a concentration camp in Siberia, and was a night-watchman there.

*Nun Veronica (Kotliarevskaya)**

BISHOP MACARIUS was the last abbot of the St. Macarius Hermitage, and when that monastery was liquidated by the Communists in 1932 he was arrested, but later he was freed. After his release, and until the Novgorod region was occupied by the Germans, Schema-Bishop Macarius was active as a catacomb bishop in the Novgorod, Petrograd and Tver regions. He would travel around the towns and villages performing secret church services as well as baptisms, marriages, and funerals. He gave the monastic tonsure to those who wished it, and ordained those whom he had prepared himself. When Novgorod was occupied by the Germans and the open confession of faith in God was allowed, Bishop Macarius retired from active church work. After

* *Memoirs,* "Russian Life" Press, San Francisco, c. 1954.

a short period of imprisonment by the Germans, he left the town of his last residence, Liuban, and came to the Pskov-Caves (Pechory) Monastery, which was then in Estonia. He was then 70 years old, tall, thin, with an ascetic appearance, looking still strong and energetic. He was a true monk: a strict faster, a fervent man of prayer, and he soon won the love of everyone in the monastery brotherhood.

To a few of those who visited him, Schema-Bishop Macarius would tell the story of his much-suffering life in the USSR. According to his own words, for the course of more than ten years he never spent two nights in a row in the same lodging. With great caution and watchfulness, and in constant danger, he wandered from one village to another, from one town to another. He worked for some people at the collective farms as a shepherd. He had very many spiritual children — lay people, secret monks, and catacomb priests. Joking, he would say that he had his own theological seminary and academy, for he would secretly prepare people to receive ordination. He also foretold the unsuccessful outcome of the war for the Germans, as well as his own death: "I shall not return from here to my homeland again." In the monastery he occupied a cell on the lower floor in the refectory building.

In the night before April 1, 1944, the town of Pechory was severely bombed by Soviet bombs. The Soviets bombed the town for the whole night, in four strikes with intervals of 40 to 50 minutes. Fortunately for the monastery, the huge two-ton bombs fell outside the monastery. Within the monastery some ten bombs of smaller caliber fell. One of these fell across from the refectory and tore out an old oak tree by the roots. A piece of the bomb penetrated through the window frame into the cell of Schema-Bishop Macarius and killed him instantly. On the analogion in front of him there was an opened gospel and a prayer book; they were covered with the Bishop's blood. The clock had stopped at 9:47 p.m. All the monks were hiding in bomb shelters, but Bishop Macarius had refused to go to the cellar and had remained in his cell praying. The bombing caused the monastery much damage, and there was even more damage and many casualties in the neighboring town of Pechory.

*Archpriest Gerasim Shoretz**

The body of Bishop Macarius was buried in the caves from which the Pskov Caves Monastery takes its name. And thus did Soviet bombs end the earthly life of a confessor of God's truth who had already suffered much inside the USSR, and who well earned the title that is his by right, of a new martyr of this much-suffering age.

* *Russian Life*, San Francisco, April 19, 1944. Also in *Orthodox Russia*, 1957, no. 3, p. 9; and in Protopresbyter M. Polsky, *Russia's New Martyrs*, Jordanville, N.Y., vol. 1, p. 181; vol. 2, p. 284. (All in Russian.)

CAN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH ENTER

A "Dialogue" with Non-Christian Religions?

III. A FAKIR'S "MIRACLE" AND THE PRAYER OF JESUS

By Archimandrite Nicholas Drobyazgin

The author of this testimony, a new martyr of the Communist Yoke, enjoyed a brilliant worldly career as a naval commander, being also deeply involved in occultism as editor of the occult journal Rebus. *Being saved from almost certain death at sea by a miracle of St. Seraphim, he made a pilgrimage to Sarov and then renounced his worldly career and occult ties to become a monk. After being ordained priest, he served as a missionary in China, India and Tibet, as the priest of various embassy churches, and as abbot of several monasteries. After* 1914 *he lived at the Kiev Caves Lavra, where he discoursed to the young people who visited him concerning the influence of occultism on contemporary events in Russia. In the autumn of* 1924, *one month after he had been visited by a certain Tuholx, the author of the book* Black Magic, *he was murdered in his cell "by persons unknown," with obvious Bolshevik connivance, stabbed by a dagger with a special handle apparently of occult significance.*

The incident here described, revealing the nature of one of the mediumistic "gifts" which are common in Eastern religions, took place not long before 1900, *and was recorded about* 1922 *by Dr. A. P. Timofievich, now of Novo-Diveyevo Convent, N.Y.* (*Russian text in* Orthodox Life, 1956, no. 1.)

ON A WONDROUS early tropical morning our ship was cleaving the waters of the Indian Ocean, nearing the island of Ceylon. The lively faces of the passengers, for the most part Englishmen with their families who were travelling to their posts or on business in their Indian colony, looked avidly in the distance, seeking out with their eyes the enchanted isle, which for practically all of them had been bound up since childhood with so much that was interesting and mysterious in the tales and descriptions of travellers.

The island was still scarcely visible when already a fine, intoxicating fragrance from the trees growing on it more and more enveloped the ship with each passing breeze. Finally a kind of blue cloud lay on the horizon, ever increasing in size as the ship speedily approached. Already one could notice the buildings spread out along the shore, buried in the verdure of majestic palms, and the many-colored crowd of the local inhabitants who were

awaiting the ship's arrival. The passengers, who had quickly become acquainted with each other on the trip, were laughing and conversing animatedly with each other on the deck, admiring the wondrous scene of the fairy-tale isle as it unfolded before their eyes. The ship swung slowly around, preparing to moor at the dock of the port city of Colombo.

Here the ship stopped to take on coal, and the passengers had sufficient time to go ashore. The day was so hot that many passengers decided not to leave the ship until evening, when a pleasant coolness replaced the heat of the day. A small group of eight people, to which I joined myself, was led by Colonel Elliott, who had been in Colombo before and knew the city and its environs well. He made an alluring proposition. "Ladies and gentlemen! Wouldn't you like to go a few miles out of town and pay a visit to one of the local magician-fakirs? Perhaps we shall see something interesting." All accepted the colonel's proposition with enthusiasm.

It was already evening when we left behind the noisy streets of the city and rolled along a marvellous jungle road which was twinkling with the sparks of millions of fireflies. Finally, the road suddenly widened and in front of us there was a small clearing surrounded on all sides by jungle. At the edge of the clearing under a big tree there was a kind of hut, next to which a small bonfire was smouldering and a thin, emaciated old man with a turban on his head sat cross-legged and with his unmoving gaze directed at the fire. Despite our noisy arrival, the old man continued to sit completely immovable, not paying us the slightest attention. Somewhere from out of the darkness a youth appeared and, going up to the colonel, quietly asked him something. In a short while he brought out several stools and our group arranged itself in a semi-circle not far from the bonfire. The youth came up again and threw a handful of some kind of roots into the bonfire. A light and fragrant smoke arose. The old man sat in the same pose, apparently noticing no one and nothing. The half-moon which arose dispelled to some extent the darkness of the night, and in its ghostly light all objects took on fantastic outlines. Involuntarily everyone became quiet and waited to see what would happen.

"Look! Look there, on the tree!" Miss Mary cried in an excited whisper. We all turned our heads in the direction indicated. And indeed, the whole surface of the immense crown of the tree under which the fakir was sitting was as it were gently flowing in the soft illumination of the moon, and the tree itself began gradually to melt and lose its contours; literally, some unseen hand had thrown over it an airy covering which became more and

more concentrated with every moment. Soon the undulating surface of the sea presented itself with complete clarity before our astonished gaze. With a light rumble one wave followed another, making foaming white-caps; light clouds were floating in a sky which had become blue. Stunned, we could not tear ourselves away from this striking picture.

And then in the distance there appeared a white ship. Thick smoke poured out of its two large smokestacks. It quickly approached us, cleaving the water. To our great amazement we recognized it as our own ship, the one on which we had come to Colombo! A whisper passed through our ranks when we read on the stern, traced out in gold letters, the name of our ship, "Luisa." But what astounded us most of all was what we saw on the ship — ourselves! Don't forget that at the time when all this happened cinematography hadn't even been thought of and it was impossible even to conceive of something like this. Each of us saw ourselves on the ship's deck amongst people who were laughing and talking to each other. But what was especially astonishing: I saw not only myself, but at the same time the whole deck of the ship down to the smallest details, as if in a bird's-eye view — which of course simply could not be in actuality. At one and the same time I saw myself among the passengers, and the sailors working at the other end of the ship, and the captain in his cabin, and even our monkey "Nelly," a favorite of all, eating bananas on the main mast. All my companions at the same time, each in his own way, were greatly excited at what they were seeing, expressing their emotions with soft cries and excited whispers.

I had completely forgotten that I was a priest-monk and, it would seem, had no business at all participating in such a spectacle. The spell was so powerful that both the mind and the heart were silent. And then suddenly someone touched my heart with an invisible hand. My heart began to beat painfully in alarm. Suddenly I was beside myself. A fear took hold of my whole being.

My lips began to move and say: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner!" Immediately I felt relieved. It was just as if some mysterious chains which had bound me began to fall away. The prayer became more concentrated, and with it my peace of soul returned. I continued to look at the tree, and suddenly, as if pursued by the wind, the picture became clouded and was dispersed. I saw nothing more except the big tree, illuminated by the light of the moon, and likewise the fakir sitting in silence by the bonfire, while my companions continued to express what they were experiencing while gazing at the picture, which for them had not been broken off.

But then something apparently happened to the fakir also. He reeled to the side. The youth ran up to him in alarm. The seance was suddenly broken up.

Deeply moved by everything they had experienced, the spectators stood up, animatedly sharing their impressions and not understanding at all why the whole thing had been cut off so sharply and unexpectedly. The youth explained it as owing to the exhaustion of the fakir, who was sitting as before, his head down, and paying not the slightest attention to those present.

Having generously rewarded the fakir through the youth for the opportunity to be participants of such an astonishing spectacle, our group quickly got together for the trip back. While starting out, I involuntarily turned back once more in order to imprint in my memory the whole scene, and suddenly — I shuddered from an unpleasant feeling. My gaze met the gaze of the fakir, which was full of hatred. It was but for a single instant, and then he again assumed his habitual position; but this glance once and for all opened my eyes to the realization of *whose* power it was that had produced this "miracle."

CONCLUSION: THE GOAL OF THE "DIALOGUE WITH NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS"

1. *"Christian" and Non-Christian Ecumenism*

AS AN ANSWER to the question of the possibility of a "dialogue" of Orthodox Christianity with the various non-Christian religions, the reader has been presented the testimony of three Orthodox Christians who confirm, on the basis of Orthodox doctrine and their own experience, what the Orthodox Church has always taught: that Orthodox Christians do not at all have the "same God" as the so-called "monotheists" who deny the Holy Trinity; that the gods of the pagans are in fact demons; and that the experiences and powers which the pagan "gods" can and do provide are satanic in nature. All this in no way contradicts the words of St. Peter, that *God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is acceptable to Him* (Acts 10:34-35); or the words of St. Paul, that *God in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness* (Acts 14:17). Those who live in the bondage of satan, the *prince of this world* (John 12:31), in darkness which is unenlightened by the Christian Gospel—are judged in the light of that natural testimony of God which every man may have, despite this bondage.

A "DIALOGUE" WITH NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS?

For the Christian, however, who has been given God's Revelation, no "dialogue" is possible with those outside the Faith. *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?... Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord* (II Cor. 6:14-17). The Christian calling is rather to bring the light of Orthodox Christianity to them, even as St. Peter did to the God-fearing household of Cornelius the Centurian (Acts 10:34-48), in order to enlighten their darkness and join them to the chosen flock of Christ's Church.

How then are we to look upon the "dialogue with non-Christian religions" which is presently gaining momentum and drawing into its sphere not merely "liberal" Protestants and Roman Catholics, but more and more "Orthodox" theologians as well? Even since the beginning of this series of articles in mid-1971, this "dialogue" has been considerably accelerated, as the following examples will demonstrate.

1. Promotional material sent out by the "Temple of Understanding" reveals that Orthodox delegates were indeed present at the second "summit conference" of this organization in Geneva in 1970 and again at the third "summit conference" in the United States in the autumn of 1971, and that Metropolitan Emilianos of the Patriarchate of Constantinople is a member of the Temple's "International Committee." The "summit conferences" offer Orthodox delegates the opportunity to enter discussions aiming to "create a world community of religions," to "hasten the realization of mankind's dream of peace and understanding" according to the philosophy of "Vivekananda, Ramakrishna, Gandhi, Schweitzer," and the founders of various religions; and the delegates likewise participate in "unprecedented" supra-confessional prayer services where "everyone prays according to the customs of the religion which he represents."* Those who have read installment II of this series, "Hinduism's Assault upon Christianity," know what Vivekananda's "dream" actually was—to "Hinduize" and destroy Christianity. One can only wonder what must be in the soul of an Orthodox Christian who not only collaborates in this task, but even prays together with those who invoke the demons of their religions in order to accomplish it.

2. The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches at its last meeting in Addis Ababa in January, 1971, gave its approval and encouragement to the holding of meetings as regularly as possible between repre-

* See *The Orthodox Word*, 1971, no. 3, p. 139.

sentatives of the WCC and representatives of other religions, specifying that "at the present stage priority may be given to bilateral dialogues of a specific nature." In accordance with this directive a major Christian-Moslem "dialogue" has been set for mid-1972 involving some 40 representatives of both sides, unquestionably including a number of Orthodox delegates. (*Al Montada,* January-February, 1972, p. 18.)

3. In February of this year another "unprecedented" ecumenical event occurred in New York when, according to Archbishop Iakovos of New York, for the first time in history the Greek Orthodox Church (Greek Archdiocese of North and South America) held an official theological "dialogue" with the Jews. In two days of discussions definite results were achieved, which may be taken as symptomatic of the future results of the "dialogue with non-Christian religions": the Greek "theologians" agreed "to review their liturgical texts in terms of improving references to Jews and Judaism where they are found to be negative or hostile." (Religious News Service.) Does not the intention of the "dialogue" become ever more obvious? — to "reform" Orthodox Christianity in order to make it conformable to the religions of this world.

But let us now look at the "theology" and the goal of this accelerating "dialogue with non-Christian religions," and see how it differs from the "Christian" ecumenism that has prevailed up to now.

"Christian" ecumenism at its best may be seen to represent a sincere and understandable error on the part of Protestants and Roman Catholics — the error of failing to recognize that the visible Church of Christ already exists, and they are outside it. The "dialogue with non-Christian religions," however, is something quite different, representing rather a conscious departure from even that part of genuine Christian belief and awareness which some Catholics and Protestants retain. It is the product, not of simple human "good intentions," but rather of a diabolic "suggestion" which can capture only those who are no longer Christians in any sense at all, but already pagans: worshippers of the *god of this world,* satan (II Cor. 4:4), and followers of whatever intellectual fashion this powerful god is capable of inspiring.

"Christian" ecumenism relies for its support upon a vague but nonetheless real feeling of "common Christianity" which is shared by many who do not think or feel too deeply about the Church, and it aims somehow to "build" a church comprising all such indifferent "Christians." But what common support can the "dialogue with non-Christians" rely on? On what possible ground can there be any kind of unity, however loose, between Christians and those who not merely do not know Christ, but — as is the case with all the present-day representatives of non-Christian religions who are in contact with Christianity — decisively *reject* Christ? Those who, like Metropoli-

tan Georges Khodre of Lebanon, lead the avant-garde of Orthodox apostates, speak of the "spiritual riches" and "authentic spiritual life" of the non-Christian religions, but it is only by doing great violence to the meaning of words and by reading his own fantasies into other people's experience that he can bring himself to say: "It is Christ alone who is received as light when grace visits a Brahmin, a Buddhist, or a Moslem reading his own scriptures," or: "Every martyr for the truth, every man persecuted for what he believes to be right, dies in communion with Christ."* Certainly these people themselves would never say that it is "Christ" they receive or die for, and the idea of an "unconscious" confession or reception of Christ is against the very nature of Christianity. If a rare non-Christian does claim to have an experience of "Christ," it can only be in the way which Swami Vivekananda describes: "We Hindus do not merely tolerate, we unite ourselves with every religion, praying in the mosque of the Mohammedan, worshipping before the fire of the Zoroastrian, and kneeling to the cross of the Christian"† — that is, as merely one of a number of equally valid "spiritual experiences."

No: "Christ," no matter how redefined or reinterpreted, cannot be the common denominator of the "dialogue with non-Christian religions," but at best can only be added as an afterthought to a unity which is discovered somewhere else. The only possible common denominator among all religions is the totally vague concept of the "spiritual," which indeed offers religious "liberals" almost unbounded opportunity for nebulous theologizing.

The address of Metropolitan Georges Khodre to the Central Committee meeting of the WCC at Addis Ababa in January, 1971, may be taken as an early, experimental attempt to set forth such a "spiritual" theology of the "dialogue with non-Christian religions."** In raising the question as to "whether Christianity is so inherently exclusive of other religions as has generally been proclaimed up to now," the Metropolitan, apart from his few rather absurd "projections" of Christ into non-Christian religions, has one main point: it is the "Holy Spirit," conceived as totally independent of Christ and His Church, that is really the common denominator of all the world's religions. Referring to the prophecy that *I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh* (Joel 2:28), the Metropolitan states, "This must be taken to mean a Pentecost which is universal from the very first.... The advent of the Spirit in the world is not subordinated to the Son.... The Spirit operates and applies his energies in accordance with his own economy and we could, from this angle, regard the non-Christian religions as points where his inspiration is at work" (p. 172). We

* *Sobornost,* Summer, 1971, p. 171.

** Full text in *ibid.*, pp. 166-174.

† See *The Orthodox Word,* 1971, no. 4, p. 166.

must, he believes, "develop an ecclesiology and a missiology in which the Holy Spirit occupies a supreme place" (p. 166).

All of this, of course, constitutes a heresy which denies the very nature of the Holy Trinity and has no aim but to undermine and destroy the whole idea and reality of the Church of Christ. Why, indeed, should Christ have established a Church if the Holy Spirit acts quite independently, not only of the Church, but of Christ Himself? Nonetheless, this heresy is here still presented rather tentatively and cautiously, doubtlessly with the aim of testing the response of other Orthodox "theologians" before proceeding more categorically. But it will not be necessary to wait for Metropolitan Khodre's next exercise in "theology," for the "ecclesiology of the Holy Spirit" has already been written — and by an "Orthodox" thinker at that, by one of the acknowledged "prophets" of the "spiritual" movement of our day. Let us therefore examine his ideas in order to see the picture he gives of the nature and goal of the larger "spiritual" movement in which the "dialogue with non-Christian religions" has its place.

2. *"The New Age of the Holy Spirit"*

NICHOLAS BERDYAEV (1874-1949) in any normal time would never have been regarded as an Orthodox Christian. He might best be described as a gnostic-humanist philosopher who drew his inspiration rather from Western sectarians and "mystics" than from any Orthodox sources. That he is called in some Orthodox circles even to this day an "Orthodox philosopher" or even "theologian," is a sad reflection of the ecclesiastical illiteracy of such circles, which are precisely the ones most open to Berdyaev's conception of "spirituality" — as we shall see. Here we shall quote from his writings.*

Looking with disdain upon the Orthodox Fathers, upon the "monastic ascetic spirit of historical Orthodoxy," indeed upon that whole "conservative Christianity which... directs the spiritual forces of man only towards contrition and salvation," Berdyaev sought rather the "inward Church," the "Church of the Holy Spirit," the "spiritual view of life which, in the 18th century, found shelter in the Masonic lodges." "The Church," he believed, "is still in a merely potential state," is "incomplete"; and he looked to the coming of an "ecumenical faith," a "fullness of faith" that would unite, not merely different Christian bodies (for "Christianity should be capable of existing in a variety of forms in the Universal Church"), but also "the partial truths of all the heresies" and "all the humanist creative activity of modern man... as a religious experience consecrated in the Spirit." A "New Christianity" is approach-

* As cited by J. Gregerson in "Nicholas Berdyaev, Prophet of a New Age," *Orthodox Life,* Jordanville, N.Y. 1962. no.6, where full references are given.

ing, a "new mysticism, which will be deeper than religions and ought to unite them." For "there is a great spiritual brotherhood... to which not only the Churches of East and West belong, but also all those whose wills are directed towards God and the Divine, all in fact who aspire to some form of spiritual elevation" — that is to say, people of every religion, sect, and religious ideology. He predicted the advent of "a new and final Revelation," "the New Age of the Holy Spirit," resurrecting the prophecy of Joachim of Floris, the 12th-century Latin monk who saw the two ages of the Father (Old Testament) and the Son (New Testament) giving way to a final "Third Age of the Holy Spirit." Berdyaev writes: "The world is moving towards a new spirituality and a new mysticism; in it there will be no more of the ascetic world view." "The success of the movement towards Christian unity presupposes a new era in Christianity itself, a new and deep spirituality, which means a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit."

The sober Orthodox Christian might at first be inclined to dismiss all this as the ravings of yet another of the would-be "prophets" of our disordered times, another "religious philosopher" gone astray by mistaking his own muddled feelings for a new "revelation." There is clearly nothing whatever in common between these super-ecumenist fantasies and Orthodox Christianity, which Berdyaev in fact despised. Yet anyone aware of the religious climate of our times will see that these ravings in fact correspond to one of the leading currents of contemporary religious thought. Berdyaev does indeed seem to be a "prophet," or rather, to have been sensitive to a current of religious thought and feeling which was not so evident in his day, but has become almost dominant today. Everywhere one hears of a new "movement of the spirit," and now a Greek Orthodox priest, Father Eusebius Stephanou, invites Orthodox Christians to join this movement when he writes an editorial in his *Logos* (Jan., 1972) entitled (in the very words of Berdyaev, as if it answer to the latter's "prophecy"): "The Mighty Outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Our Day." And lest it be thought that Fr. Eusebius only accidentally talks in the language of Berdyaev, one need only look elsewhere in the same publication (March, 1972, p. 8) to find the Associate Editor Ashanin invoking not merely the name, but also the very program, of Berdyaev: "We recommend the writings of Nicholas Berdyaev, the great spiritual prophet of our age. This spiritual genius... [is] the greatest theologian of spiritual creativeness.... Now the cocoon of Orthodoxy has been broken.... God's Divine Logos is leading His people to a new understanding of their history and their mission in Him. *The Logos,* herald of this new age,... of the new posture of Orthodoxy..."

But Fr. Eusebius speaks somewhat more coherently of the new spiritual *butterfly* that is now supposedly hatching from the "cocoon of Orthodoxy." In his article Fr. Eusebius refers to the "charismatic revival" which, arising from the Pentecostal sect which was founded at the beginning of this century, in the past ten years has made sensational advances within all the leading denominations, including Roman Catholicism, and now has spread to several Orthodox churches in the United States. Fr. Eusebius believes that "this outpouring of the Spirit is transcending denominational lines... A large-scale outpouring of the Holy Spirit is occurring among Protestants and Roman Catholics many of whom have been receiving the gifts of tongues, prophecy, and healing.... The Spirit of God is moving in wonderful and exciting ways, dear reader, both inside and outside the Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church. Don't be left out. Open your heart to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and be part of the growing charismatic renewal."

These words, coming from someone who claims to be leading a movement of "Orthodox awakening," are a challenge to the sincere Orthodox Christian. Here it is of crucial importance to follow the command of the Apostle and Evangelist John, to *believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God* (I John 4:1). No Orthodox Christian can "open his heart" to any spirit if he is not absolutely certain that it is of God; and if it is not of God, then the appeal to join this movement can only be seen as an attempt to corrupt and destroy the souls of Orthodox Christians. The issue is literally a matter of spiritual life or death.

Let us then examine, from the viewpoint of Orthodox Christianity, the one true Church of Christ where we know the Holy Spirit is, the chief characteristics of the present-day "charismatic revival," expanding our conclusion to this series of articles into a final installment. Here it would seem that the "theology" of Metropolitan Georges Khodre and the "prophecy" of Nicholas Berdyaev receive their fulfillment in actual practice in a movement which its followers claim reproduces the fervor and the very miracles of the Apostolic age. The literature of this movement is already vast, and this enables us to study it in detail, comparing it point for point with the teaching of the Holy Fathers of the Orthodox Church, who were well acquainted with "charismatic" phenomena, both true and false. We shall find that this study, rather startlingly, brings us right back to the subject of this series of articles: non-Christian religion; only now, instead of mere "dialogue," it uncovers for us a more advanced stage of contemporary "spirituality," and indeed would seem to offer a key to the understanding of this rather nebulous realm. And beyond this, already visible on the spiritual horizon, lies the even more spectacular goal and end of the whole "ecumenical" quest of modern man.

Next issue: IV. The "Charismatic Revival" as a Sign of the Times